

## YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR SAFETY!

Natural areas present hazards. Rocks roll, trees topple, and limbs drop without warning. Wild animals, uneven ground, and changing weather can pose dangers. People may create other hazards through campfires, traffic, snowplay, and poor decisions.

Water is the main cause of death here. Many drowning victims were walking or climbing near rivers and unexpectedly fell in.

The Park Service works to reduce risks, but your safety is in your hands. Keep alert. Read warnings and ask a ranger for advice.

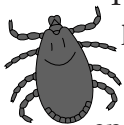


**SNOWPLAY:** Every year there are serious injuries. Don't slide or ski on or into plowed roads, trees, or rocky areas. Sleds have better steering and handholds than other devices. Please be safe and considerate.

**SAFE WINTER TRAVEL:** Avoid going alone. Tell someone your plans and return time. Beware of uneven or slippery surfaces. Wear sunglasses and sunscreen to avoid snowglare. Watch out on roads for people on sleds, skis, cars, bikes, snowmobiles, and on foot.

**HYPOTHERMIA:** This life-threatening condition can occur year-round. Stay dry and snack often. If others don't respond to the need for warmer clothes or are stumbling, forgetful, or extremely tired and drowsy, get warm sugary drinks into them immediately. Get them into dry clothing, sleeping bags, and shelter.

**TICKS** are common in foothill grasses; check yourself after a walk. Their bite is painless, but a small percentage carry Lyme disease. Remove them carefully with tweezers; seek a ranger's and/or doctor's advice.



**DROWNING** is the #1 cause of death in national parks. Getting out of rivers can be nearly impossible; rocks are smooth and slippery and swift, cold water saps your strength. Be extra careful along rivers; falling in is as dangerous as swimming.

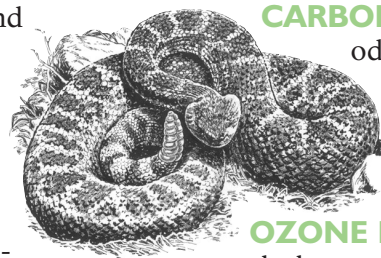
**PLAGUE:** Please do not feed or touch ANY park animals. Fleas on rodents can carry plague. Deer mice feces can carry hantavirus.



**POISON OAK** is a common foothills shrub. Red in fall with whitish berries, bare in winter, its shiny green spring leaves grow in groups of three. If you touch

any part of the plant, wash skin and clothes as soon as possible.

**RATTLESNAKES:** Watch where you put your hands and feet! Common in the foothills, rattlesnakes are protected in parks. Most bites result from teasing or handling them. Very few people die, but tissue damage can be severe. If bitten, avoid panic; call a ranger or 911.



**COUGARS** roam the parks, but chances of seeing one are very small. It is rare, but mountain lions have attacked people and pets, so be aware. Avoid hiking alone. Watch children closely; never let them run ahead. If you see a cougar, the goal is to convince it that you are not prey and may be dangerous to it:

- Don't run. Cougars associate running with prey and give chase.
- Try to appear as large as possible. Don't crouch or try to hide.
- Hold your ground or back away slowly while facing the lion.
- Pick up children.
- If the lion acts aggressively, wave your hands, shout, and throw stones or sticks at it.
- If attacked, fight back!
- Report any cougar sightings.

**UNSAFE WATER:** Giardia, a protozoan in lakes and streams, can cause intestinal problems. Iodine and other chemicals may not be as reliable as heat in killing bacteria or Giardia, but can be effective if used properly. Boil drinking water at least 3 minutes.

**SAFE WATER:** Each of the parks' 13 water systems is tested regularly to ensure that it meets state and federal

standards. Annual Consumer Confidence Reports are available at visitor centers, or call 559-565-3341.

**CARBON MONOXIDE:** This odorless, colorless gas can be fatal. Never burn charcoal in enclosed spaces such as a tent, camper, or RV.

**OZONE POLLUTION:** This colorless gas rises into the Sierra on warm afternoon winds. Levels are highest May to October, peaking in late afternoon. These peaks sometimes reach "unhealthy" state and federal standards and can affect respiratory systems. See air-quality index forecasts in visitor centers. Ozone forms in sunlight from gases in car and factory exhaust. This statewide problem challenges us all to reduce pollution.

**WEST NILE VIRUS** is caused by bites from infected mosquitos. The chance of infection is low; human illness is rare. Avoid mosquito bites.

**LIGHTNING:** As soon as you see dark clouds or lightning or hear thunder, get inside a large building or a vehicle, if possible. Do not stand under trees or in shallow caves. Avoid projecting above the surrounding landscape such as standing on a ridge, on Moro Rock, or in open areas. Stay away from water, wire fences, and metal railings.

### OPERATION NO-GROW

- Prevent illegal marijuana growing.
- Protect visitor & employee safety.
- Preserve our natural resources.
- Promote *your* National Park experience!

Keep parks safe and free from illegal activities! Report suspicious activities to 1-888-NPS-CRIME.

## Rules of the Road

### ROAD CONDITIONS

24-hour recording: 559-565-3341 then press 9, then 4.

### ALWAYS CARRY CHAINS

Make sure they fit your tires. Obey "Chains Required" signs. Buy or rent chains in shops outside the parks. Snow tires are often required; they show M / S, M+S (mud+snow) or a snowflake on the side of the tire. Be sure to check!

### SNOWPLOWS RULE

Plows may operate day & night, moving with or against traffic. If you see one, slow down but don't stop. Proceed cautiously, watching for signals from the plow operator.

### GET SNOW OFF CAR ROOFS

The driver's vision gets blocked when snow slides onto the windshield when going downhill.

### NO GAS STATIONS IN PARK

Only Grant Grove market sells cans of emergency gas. Fill up in Three Rivers, Clingan's Junction, or at Hume Lake (in national forest) - 24 hours with credit card; year round. 11 miles (18 km) north of Grant Grove via Hwy 180.

### EXPECT ICY ROADS

Slow down. Don't turn, speed up, or stop suddenly; you will lose traction. Allow six seconds of stopping distance between cars.

### WINTERIZE YOUR CAR

Check antifreeze, battery, wipers, & chains before your trip.

### DON'T LOSE YOUR BRAKES

Always downshift when going downhill. In automatic vehicles, put the gearshift on 1, 2 or L. The engine gets louder as it slows you down, but it will save your brakes.

### BICYCLES

Ride only on roads (not trails), single file with traffic, & wear light-colored clothes after dark. People under 18 must wear a helmet.

### LET OTHERS PASS

Slower vehicles *must* use paved turnouts to let traffic pass.

### EMERGENCY CAR REPAIRS

Need towing? Call 24-hour park switchboard: 565-3341 then press zero. In Sequoia Park only, AAA available for out-of-gas, lock outs, jump starts, minor repairs: call 565-4070 (24-hour).

### VEHICLE LENGTH ADVISORY

On 12 narrow miles from Potwisha Campground to Giant Forest Museum in Sequoia, advised maximum is 22 feet (6.7m). Maximum legal length limit on the Generals Highway is 40 feet (12 m) for single vehicles, 50 feet (15 m) for vehicles plus a towed unit. Alternatives: Hwy 180 from Fresno is straighter, less steep, & wider. Or, if you are towing a car, try camping in the foothills & using it to explore.

### STAY ON PAVEMENT

Park & travel on pavement only.

### MOTORCYCLES

Avoid oil buildup in the uphill lane.

### WINTER ROAD CLOSURES

Generals Highway (main park road) closes for plowing between Wuk-sachi & Grant Grove during & after storms. Depending on snowfall, closure may be brief or last for weeks.

#### IN KINGS CANYON –

• Highway 180 to Cedar Grove: Closed below Hume Lake turnoff until mid-April.

• Panoramic Point Road: Opens late spring.

• Redwood Mountain Road: Unpaved, rough. Not plowed.

#### IN SEQUOIA –

• Crystal Cave Road: Opens mid-May, weather permitting.

• Middle Fork Road: Gated at Hospital Rock when wet.

• Mineral King Road: Opens 5/28, weather permitting.

• Moro Rock / Crescent Meadow Road: Opens late spring.

• South Fork Road: Partially unpaved. Slippery when wet.

• Big Meadows, Quail Flat/Ten Mile, Converse Basin (FS): Not plowed.